2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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262 is practically non-obtainable, and gourds and occasional maize-cobs are often the only available foods. Thus the diet changes completely in composition from one season to another—a characteristic feature of primitive societies, of which the effects have not yet been investigated. Such essential constituents as are provided by the green vegetables, fruit, meat, and fish, given in the Appendix I, are only available for short periods of the year.

[146] To conclude, it can be said that most constituents considered essential to a balanced dietary are present in the Bemba environment, with the important exceptions of sufficient animal protein, fat, and salt. There is an absolute shortage of millet reckoned either by the figures of the amount available annually or from the obvious seasonal scarcity, and the natives' reliance on this one staple makes this lack a dangerous one. The most valuable accessary foods such as the pulses only last part of the year, and the supply of green vegetables is limited to a few months. Milk is never obtainable. Except in the case of meat and milk these deficiencies appear to be due to difficulties of production, storing, and exchange rather than to any particular environmental defects.

Physique and Energy.

142 It is impossible to describe the physique and output of energy of the natives living on this diet, as no medical examination of the people for this purpose has been made. Certain superficial observations may, however, be included for general interest.

Compared to the surrounding tribes the Bemba are tall and muscular, but it is exceedingly rare to find any member of the [145] tribe who is fat.[1] Girls between 16 and 18 are often quite plump, but they soon lose the extra fat and take on the angular figures of their mothers. Members of the royal family tend to be taller than the commoners, but it is not usual even to find a chief who is fat as compared with photographs of kings and notable personages among [856] the Zulu and other pastoral tribes. Babies are usually plump and well covered before they are weaned, but after that their arms and legs become skinny and their abdomens bulge in the manner common to so many African children.

[141] [1] It has been found recently that the average weight of 589 adult males *accepted* for mine work at Nkana was 127·65 lb. (9 stone 1 lb. 10 oz.), and that 83 per cent. weighed under 140 lb. (10 stone). This lightness in weight as compared to the European averages may, of course, be a racial characteristic.